be brave
bold robot

what to do with old love letters

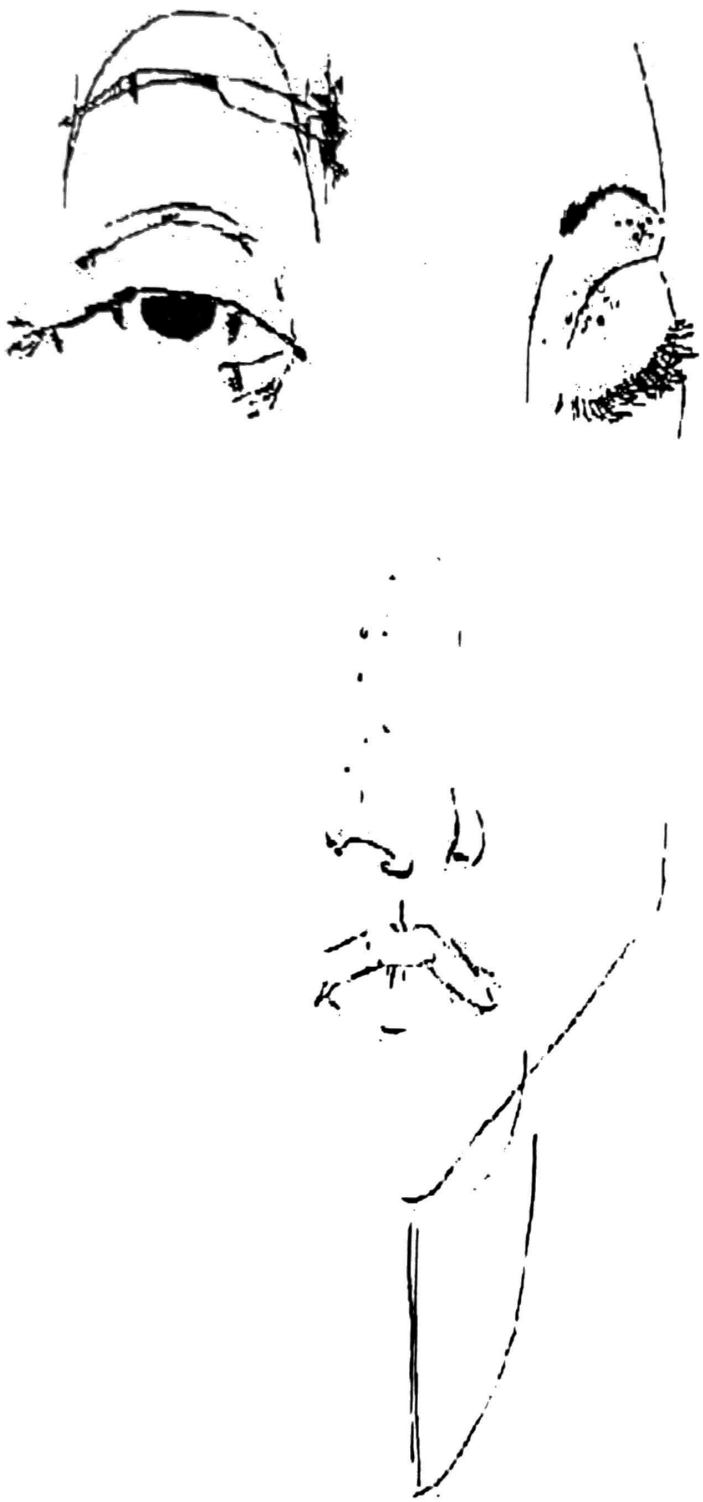
Pile them in the family room
and let the dog lay on top.
Don't read anything.
A relapse could really kill the mood.

Cram them into an ice chest
and drag it out to your buddy's pickup.
Dump everything into the bed and leave the tailgate
Down. Find your keys,
put the dog in passenger side.

Get in the truck and before you start the engine
have a final memory. Pick a good one.

Start the truck and drive slow to
nearest freeway onramp.
You might have to use the hazards
and stay on the shoulder. That's ok.

Merge into the fast lane and say these words out loud
"Goodbye forever you fucking beautiful mess!"
and hit the gas.
Let them all blow out the back.
Feel the weight of the truck lighten. Roll the window down
and sing "I will survive" (the Cake version)
into the night.



I don't want you
(amazing, hot poet girl)

Just so you know—
it's not at all tempting to me
to sit here with you
on the edge of my bed
and watch you keep your hair
out of your mouth
while tilting
from laughter

I don't want to touch
any part of you
especially your lips.

I have not even come close to
pushing your shoulders back
into my mattress
and tracing your chin with my face
taking you in
sweetly, pausing to daze
then back to tracing

honestly
that is not, at all,
what I want.

If anything
I wouldn't mind, maybe,
for a moment,
your hands
slowly slipping off my neck
after an obviously long hug

or you occasionally
pretending to brush my leg
with your hand
as you reach for a pillow.

Outrageous, I know—
I suppose we could remain
at safe distances

where we have spent the past few hours
making crazy love with words
and hoping the other
will lose control.

The Cry Card By Elisabeth Pinio, as reprinted from www.myspace.com/twistedprincesss

Everyone pulls a card at some point. There are plenty of cards in the deck. The big ones, listed in ascending order of value: the Race Card, the Woman Card , the Gay Card, the Cripple Card, the Guilt Card (equivalent to a King), and the highest card of all, the Ace of all cards: the Cry Card. Nothing is more powerful than the Cry Card, unless you use the Cry Card with the Cripple Card or something. That's like a pair of aces. How can you top a crying cripple? You can't. But alone, the Cry Card does just fine.

If you are smart about your use of Cards, and combine say, the Woman Card, the Guilt Card, another Guilt Card (for multiple offenses), and the Cry Card, you can unleash a Full House or Straight of guilt and shame upon the perpetrator. Quite effective. So I've heard. I would never resort to such tactics, of course. I'm perfect, remember?

It all started earlier this week, when a coworker (one of the good ones. I have to say that because he will read this) came over and said something to the equivalent of, "well, you're single anyway so you're all alone..." and I said, "Do you want me to cry? Is that what you want?" This initiated the discussion of the Cry Card and its vast and limitless powers. Any argument will quickly be extinguished with the Cry Card. It doesn't matter what was said or done. The end result is always the same: "Well, YOU made her cry." I'm assuming it's a chick that pulls the Cry Card most often, because ladies, let's be real. I cried because someone stole my parking spot at Sac State once. Hell, I cried because the post office returned a letter for insufficient postage. So chances are, statistically speaking, that the Cry Card puller will be a woman. I'll just mention that on those two occasions, I wasn't deliberately pulling the Cry Card. I'm not a calculating manipulator, I'm just emotionally unstable.

If by some crazy twist of fate, the Cry Card doesn't immediately kill an argument, it will at least bring it to a screeching temporary break. Voices are lowered, tones are softened, fists are dropped (hopefully it's not this kind of an argument). Never underestimate the power of the Cry Card.

In everyday life, outside of arguments, the Cry Card usually works as well. If anything, it makes people really uncomfortable. Especially men. Whenever I cry around guys, they get that look. Like a decomposing corpse just crashed through the ceiling and knocked over their last beer. After that, the results vary. If it's someone I'm dating, they snap out of it and console me on autopilot. Like Michael Douglas in every movie with a chick: (As he's pressing her close) "It's ok. It'll be ok. You're gonna be ok." My dad gets all nervous and fidgety, like I'm a bomb that just exploded right in his face and he doesn't know how to escape or alert the authorities (my mom) without causing more damage. I eventually stopped crying in front of him because it got really awkward for both of us. It's just not worth it. There are other Cards I can pull, like the Youngest Child Card. That always works.

That being said, it's important not to overuse the Cry Card, because it will quickly lose value. You have to spread it out, and make it count. If Wendy's fucks up your order, don't cry. They won't care. They may feel uncomfortable, but they won't do anything. That's when you use another Card, like the Cripple Card, or maybe the Gay Card if you can pull it off. If someone cheats on you, definitely use the Cry Card (with the Guilt Card). All the guilt and regret in the world will befall on the cheater once you pull that Card. But if you're a sniveling, needy clinger and not much fun to be around anyway, then you probably deserve to be cheated on in the first place. In which case you probably use the Cry Card WAY too much anyway, rendering it useless. It's kind of like the P-wing in Super Mario Bros. 3: You only get so many, unless you find more. So use them wisely.

The Tender Dance of the Entertainer and the Entertained

Relationships are a responsibility/necessary pleasure/casualty, of being alive. The price we pay for having other entities in our shared space-time to help create the atmosphere that ultimately feeds our minds and bodies the nutrients they need to Rock. Alas, it is an inevitable human trait to neglect or ignore this great responsibility--that much appears certain to me (and perhaps the greatest human tragedy, or at least the provenance of many other great human tragedies). We see what we want to see. But! Let us not forget. Not that we must "be nice", or have any sort of required modes of behavior within all of our countless relationships, but, simply, let us not forget that they exist.

I know. Duh.

My point. My point is that "Rock Shows" [the name I will give for any sort of situation where you have one group of people (or person) who are paying deliberate attention to another group of people (or person), the latter group being aware of the former's gift of attention, and taking advantage of it in one of many different ways]...rock shows are relationships. More accurately, rock shows are our gift for having to deal with relationships that really matter, or moreover, relationships that last longer than Rock Shows. Please don't get me wrong! My point (if I ever come to it...how's that for a long relationship!) lies mostly in my contention that they matter most righteously, these relationships that we have with rock shows. It's just that the self-contained nature of a rock show, premeditated or otherwise, ensures that there is an end*, and it will be no further than a few days away. You embrace, you part ways, and in between you experience the relationship that is a rock show. The relationship ends because the rock show, relationship entity A to your Entity B, stops making noise and becomes a memory (the intensity of which depending on how much "fun" you actually had at the rock show).

*let us assume that this writing's definition of a relationship notes a distinct "end" to such a thing as a relationship and is not in consideration of the very real phenomena of a lasting relationship with a memory or any other sort of idea or representation of an expired entity (that once existed but now does not).

So. We have established (or maybe just I have....are you following me?!...I know, I'm easily misunderstood...so I lead myself to believe...) that being at a Rock Show is like being in the middle of a relationship, and relationships are a thing not to be neglected and active attention must be paid by all parties during the course that the relationship runs. Good.

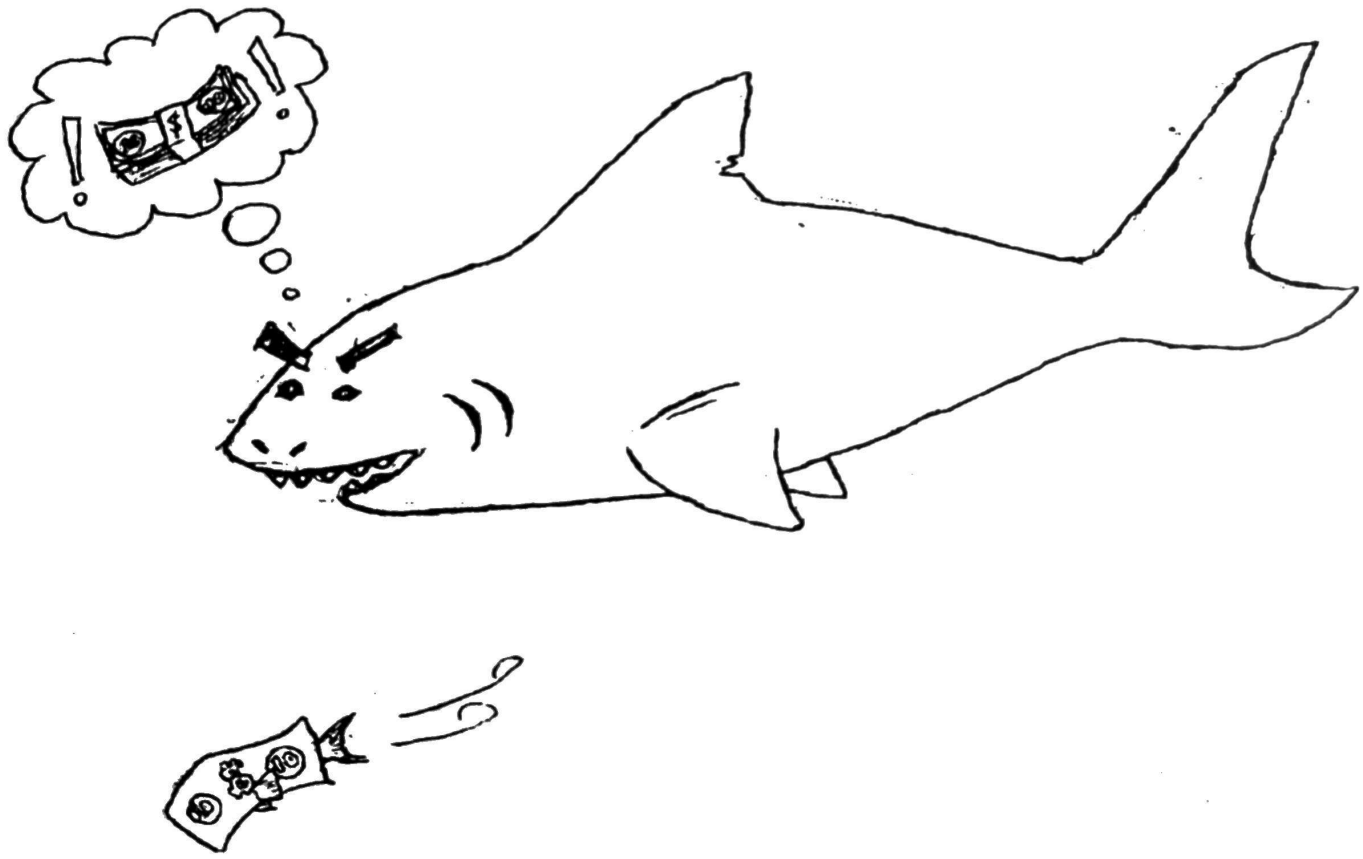
Now, Rock Shows take on two basic forms; big ones, and little ones. If performing music has not become a career for you, and you don't tour incessantly, then you probably play mostly little shows. And we have all attended both little shows and big shows (I say this realizing that maybe there are some people who take zero interest in local music, and only go to "big" rock shows when the last American Idol winner comes through town...and I say THAT instantly feeling a small pang of guilt for the fact that I don't go to as many local shows as I should...lazy Dean...). The relationship dynamic at big shows is different than the dynamic at little ones, but there exists the relationship, to be sure.

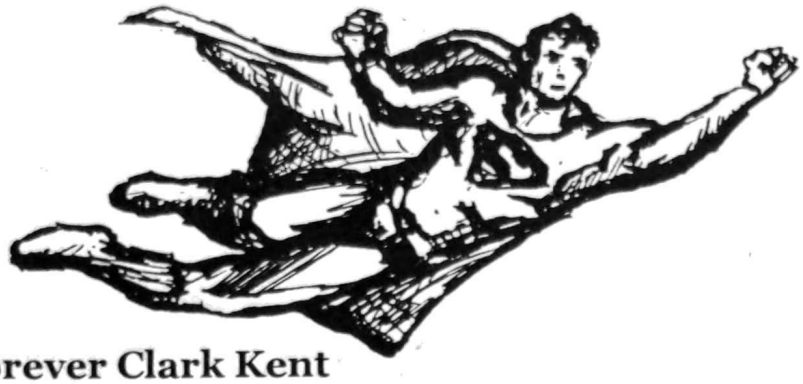
I play music in Sacramento. I really haven't played in too many other cities, and have never played to more than around a hundred people (except the 2006 SAMMIES, Rock!). Sacramento shows are intimate, little shows. Always. I don't think shows exceed more than a hundred people, commonly, and it's usually more like 40, or 7. As the Entertainer in the relationship that is a rock show, I realize that I have the easy job. I speak my mind and sing my songs, and do some practiced "skitting", or "soapBoxing" once in a while. At both little shows and big shows, whatever the Entertainer says (necessarily into the microphone at the big shows), people will hear and relate to in whatever way, and hopefully absorb, and possibly be moved to act upon. To a smaller audience, the Entertainer will be able to be more aware of the audience's subtle nuances, thus adding a whole new dynamic, and, really, making little shows a bit more full of accountability than big shows. The responsibility of the Entertainer is to pay attention to this relationship. Say Hi to the person on the other end.

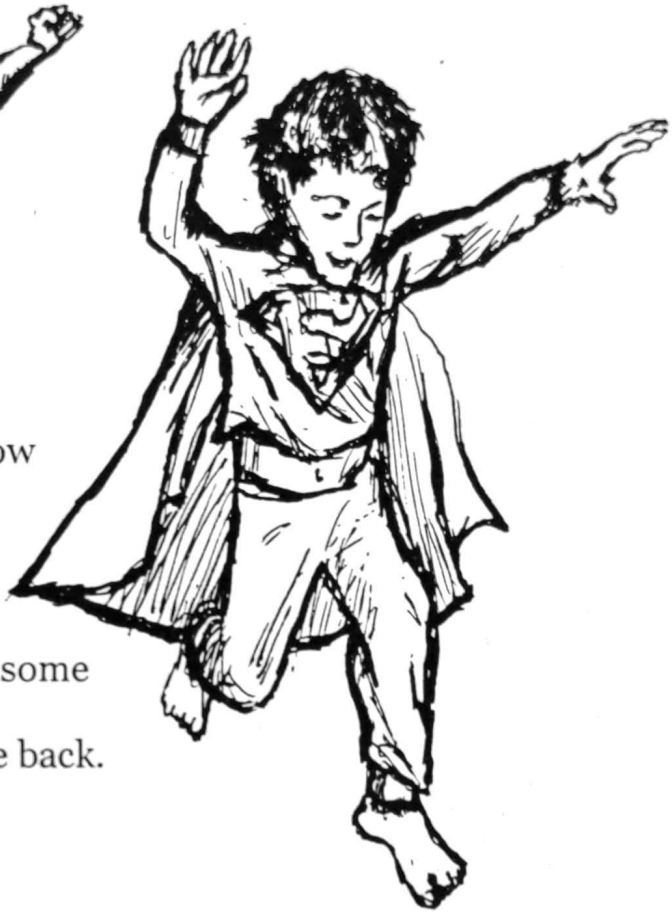
For the Entertained, (the audience half of the rock show relationship), things are a bit more tricky. The Entertainer must know how you feel. The success of any relationship hinges upon communication. The question is "what do you expect me to do dammit?!" Big Shows. With Big Shows, unless you are right up in front of the stage, amongst the area of the massive "entity of the Entertained" that does the verbal communicating with the Entertainer, you don't have the option of dialogue. Tis a shame, but you can make up for it by dancing, or screaming, or concentrating really hard those good thoughts in your brain, and flinging them towards the stage and/or your immediate section of audience hive (in the hopes of increasing stage directed group energy). For the Entertained at little shows, members of the somewhat intimate to very intimate audience, holding heavy influence on the Entertainer, things are also much more filled with accountability and the need for action than at Big Shows. Your responsibility is to have a relationship with the Entertainer. Hiss, yell Naughty words, or full naughty sentences, tell them that you love them, if in fact you do. Dance. Oh my God, how much happier relationships would be if everybody danced. Respond, in some way, to the nervous psychobabble or tame speeches that are directed AT YOU by the Entertainer. Make Guttural animal noises or throw the wit back. Hell, sitting or standing there and staring at the Entertainer makes a lot of sense too, if that's what you feel. The point is just to be aware of the relationship. Personally, I am a bit jittery and usually feel compelled to make conversation (however boring or inane....just so that I can let the person know that I am paying some sort of attention) when I am in a relationship with somebody, so I am just naturally compelled to try and dance and make noises at a rock show. But, screw me. Truly. Screw everybody, except the immediate entity you are engaged in a relationship with (of which, remember, there are sometimes several at once, and many overall, and it is imperative that you pay attention to every and all). And Remember that rock shows are relationships that you are involved in when you attend them, and that littler rock shows (in comfortably familiar places) are the ones where the intimacy plays a factor, thus making them more dependent on your relationship activity at the time, and that it's ok to scream and dance and say things, and, really, most Entertainers would probably say that they would prefer even demeaning feedback (the confident entertainer brushing any harsh off as a joke) than none at all. Act a Fool! Act Tribal! Make some Noise!...or don't....it's entirely up to you.

Barfly in Hollywood

It is the ghost of a Wednesday night in an area of Hollywood which once used to harbor glamour and made dreams; a place which is now grime and motels and bars. The bars are brightly lit outside by busted neons fizzing and sparking from above the doors. Inside, the places are dark, smoky, an air of stale peanuts and sour breath. In The Golden Horn, the only light a dull bulb hanging from a ceiling fan, the counter stretching out from the mirror and wrapping around it like a horse shoe, consumers sit among smoldering cigarettes, quiet, pensive, never looking up or around, completely oblivious to the people around them, absorbed in drink. The jukebox is as silent as the drinkers and the only sound is the rustle of the bartender's newspaper. I notice a man in the middle of the bar, looking straight ahead, slightly leaned back on the stool to fit his stomach, smoke creeping from his nostrils, and realize it is Bukowski himself. Great bags sag under his eyes, wrinkles draw maps on his cheeks, his chin is doubled. I lean over to talk to Mickey Rourke, who happened to be sitting beside me, to say, "Holy shit, that's Bukowski, the man you're supposed to be playing." Mickey looks over and gives a grunt. He swallows a shot of bourbon in the same moment as Bukowski. "I'm better looking than him, plus I've never read his stuff," he says. Bukowski looks over slowly, pointing his red eyes at Mickey. "Only fools and people who are scared of life are actors." The bartender pours another bourbon for Bukowski. Mickey starts to say something, then pushes away from the bar and steps out through the doors into the wet street. Bukowski stares straight ahead, sipping at his drink.







Forever Clark Kent
By Kyle R. Larson

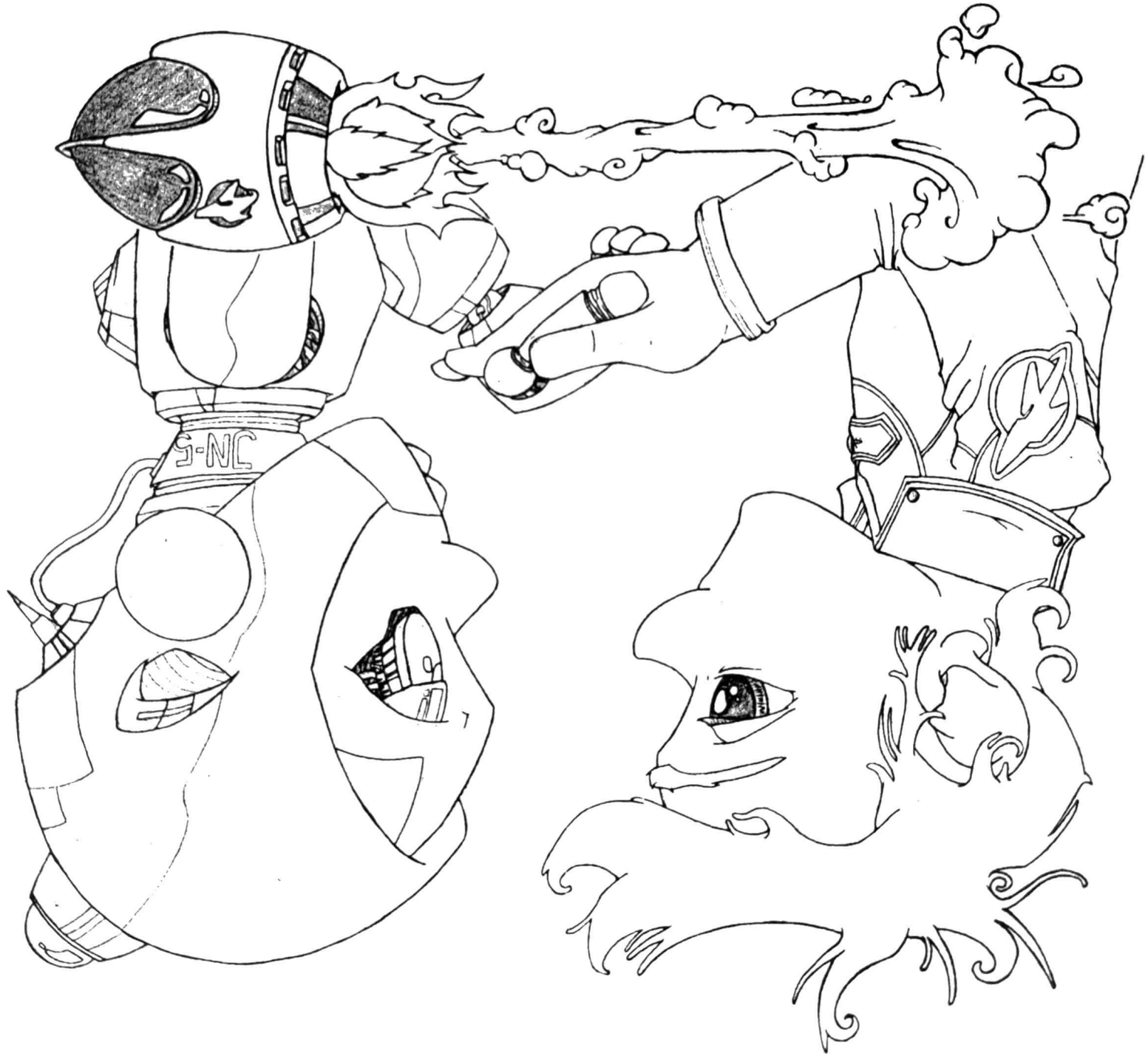
My Superman soared in the wide-open window
Sheered through the wind he swayed.
My nostrils flared, filled with cold air,
as Mom drove.

He swept over buildings, pummeled through some
Angled black brows, two blue dots for eyes,
His red cape flapped, slapped against his blue back.

Superman slowed, red cape still
Strands of hair fell curled on my forehead.
And I pushed the door open into hot light,
another door into dark blue cool,
and held Mom's hand.
A white coat with grey pants patted me on the head.
Luther.

Cold metal frames pinched my hair,
rubber pressed on my nose,
The backs of my hot ears hooked and sore.
In the mirror, white glare on crystal glass
Hid my eyes from me and the wind on the way home.

Together we sat, door closed in my room
Superman on my dresser, he slumped over and slept,
Two blue dots for eyes to the ceiling
And me with my fogged glass eyes
Leaking wet, my nose stuffed.
I flung them at the ground
Where my Halloween costume lay crushed in the corner,
Dead.


S-NC

How to Raise A Human Being
Or
THIS SIDE UP

by
Stefan Wenk

As any good gardener can tell you, growing a successful crop requires a lot of preparation, patience and practice. Sadly, when it comes to raising a crop of kids most people do not take time to prepare, lose all of their patience and never even think of practicing. The results we see all around us are perhaps not what we could expect, given the degree to which the average parents self-abdicate their parental role. I believe that what is saving us at this moment is the fact that children are a lot more resilient than roses, and what we do, or do not do to them, seems to even itself out over time. What I wonder however, is how much better the world would be if more people who decide to procreate would follow a simple recipe for rightness in raising their rugrats.

First, let me define "rightness." This isn't the same "rightness" that has been preached at us from so many ivory pulpits, nor is it necessarily the "rightness" taught to us by our parents, nor even the "rightness" we feel in our innermost beings. Rightness is actually something that will be taught to us, little by little, by our own little ones. Maria Montessori, a pioneer in Education once said: "Children will educate themselves under the right conditions. They require guidance and sympathy far more than instruction." A bread recipe will not list lightness or consistency as ingredients to add. Instead, some of the ingredients we do add in the right amount at the right time will give us bread with the right texture and airiness. So as we strive to raise a child to be "right" or "just" or "just right" we will need to do the right things at the right time to ensure the right outcome.

With this in mind, let's look over our recipe for a Human Being to make sure we have all the ingredients in the right proportion. First, we will need preparation. To most people today preparation means painting the nursery and taking Lamaze classes to make sure the birth doesn't hurt too much. Actually when a couple is pregnant, they already are parents. Therefore, the time for true preparation has to come before the gestation period has begun if not before the marriage. When a farmer prepares for a crop, he does more than paint the barn.

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Preparation actually begins in the field the prior year. Sometimes the crop in the field one year will determine what to plant the following year. The soil has to be turned over and the irrigation has to be planned far in advance of the actual planting. When two people get together with the idea of starting a family, they already have. By the simple act of choosing a partner or mate we have chosen the person who will have an equal say to ours in the rearing of the next generation.

If this act of choosing a co-parent is based on anything short of a complete and comprehensive understanding of the other person's content and character, we have performed a great disservice to our future children. If, on the other hand, we consult with our own parents, and the two families involved take the time to get to know each other, we can be much more assured of success in our endeavor. Once the choice has been made as to whom, we can then turn to how. This next level of preparation will include both potential parents and may take a few years. As the farmer had to prepare the soil in the field before planting so will the couple need to prepare their home prior to taking that next step in parenthood, pregnancy.

Home, sweet home. Home is where the heart is. Home, home on the range? What is a home and how does one prepare it for someone who has never known another one? I think the most important aspect of a home to a newcomer is unity. Where there is unity there is oneness. Oneness in direction, oneness in attitude and oneness in purpose. Where are we headed, how are we travelling and why are we going there? If a couple can arrive at unanimous agreement as to what these three answers are, then they are well on their way to raising some fine human beings. If on the other hand we find irreconcilable differences cropping up when we examine these fundamental life questions, we should wonder why we are even married to this person and did we really follow that last step appropriately?

If we indeed achieve harmonious humility in our approach to life, we are ready for the next step. At this point, we come to an extremely important ingredient in raising the next generation. It would be nice to direct prospective parents to a book or college curriculum, which would give them illimitable patience, but, alas, that is not possible. Instead it appears that each one of us is on our own self-study course to the acquisition of that composed constancy that, once achieved, will be the ideal ally in assisting our progeny to their own

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pinnacle of perseverance. All I can say in this regard is that usually when one of the parents is at the end of their rope, the other parent, if the two are 'one', can jump right in and lend a hand. We must also remember that a co-conspirator of patience is consistency in that while we are patient we must carry through.

Practice makes perfect. So if we want perfect kids, why don't we practice? At first, you might ask how in the world could we practice if the kids are not even born yet? Fair question in that all children are different. However, some basic dos and don'ts can be learned at your local child-care center. These in turn would definitely help in the short and long run. I often wonder why we expect teachers, who spend much less time with our kids, to go through such rigorous hands-on training in child handling techniques, while the people who brought the young ones into the world do so without even knowing which side is up, literally. When a couple has passed the first two stages of child rearing, namely becoming prepared and achieving patience, if only the tag-team approach, they are ready to go to school.. Any community college has classes on parenting techniques, and quite often these are even available in the evening. These courses are frequently aimed toward the professional child-care worker. This should only make it clearer that these courses are for parents, since who works harder caring for a child than its parent. Moreover, as far as the professional part of it goes there is no greater pay than seeing an adult human being and knowing that that is your handiwork.

In the end, we must realize that in following this plan for raising the next generation we are doing more than that. We are in fact raising up generations to come and, as is accepted in many cultures in the world today, the only true path to immortality is through our progeny. Let us secure our eternity with a sense of humility, a sense of humanity and a sense of humor. As a great Internet philosopher once put it best: "Learn the names of every character from Barney and Friends, Sesame Street, and Power Rangers. When you find yourself singing, "I love you, you love me" at work, that's when you finally qualify as a parent."

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I know a photographer who is friends with a famous author. I met this author back in 1999 at my friend's photo studio, the author is a really nice person, or he was to me anyway. I have not read his books, I don't really plan to. I have always wanted to photograph him because of something he said to me during the long afternoon the day we met: "Love and Hate is almost the same thing, when you Love someone you think about them all the time, almost every waking moment, and when you hate someone you think about them almost every waking moment." This is not a direct quote, but I'm sure you get the point.

The author doesn't like to be photographed. I have asked on many occasions over the years to take a portrait of him, I was declined every time. So I asked him if I could photograph his shadow, he agreed on two conditions: 1. it had to be fast (the shoot was over in 5 to 10 minutes) and 2. My friend the photographer had to be in the photograph with him. I'm sorry I cannot tell you the author's name; I promised him I would not tell anyone. He is just a very private person and like I said before, though it might seem like he is an ass, he is not. He's a really great and talented man who likes to remain unknown. Chances are even if I did tell you his name most people would say, "Who?!"

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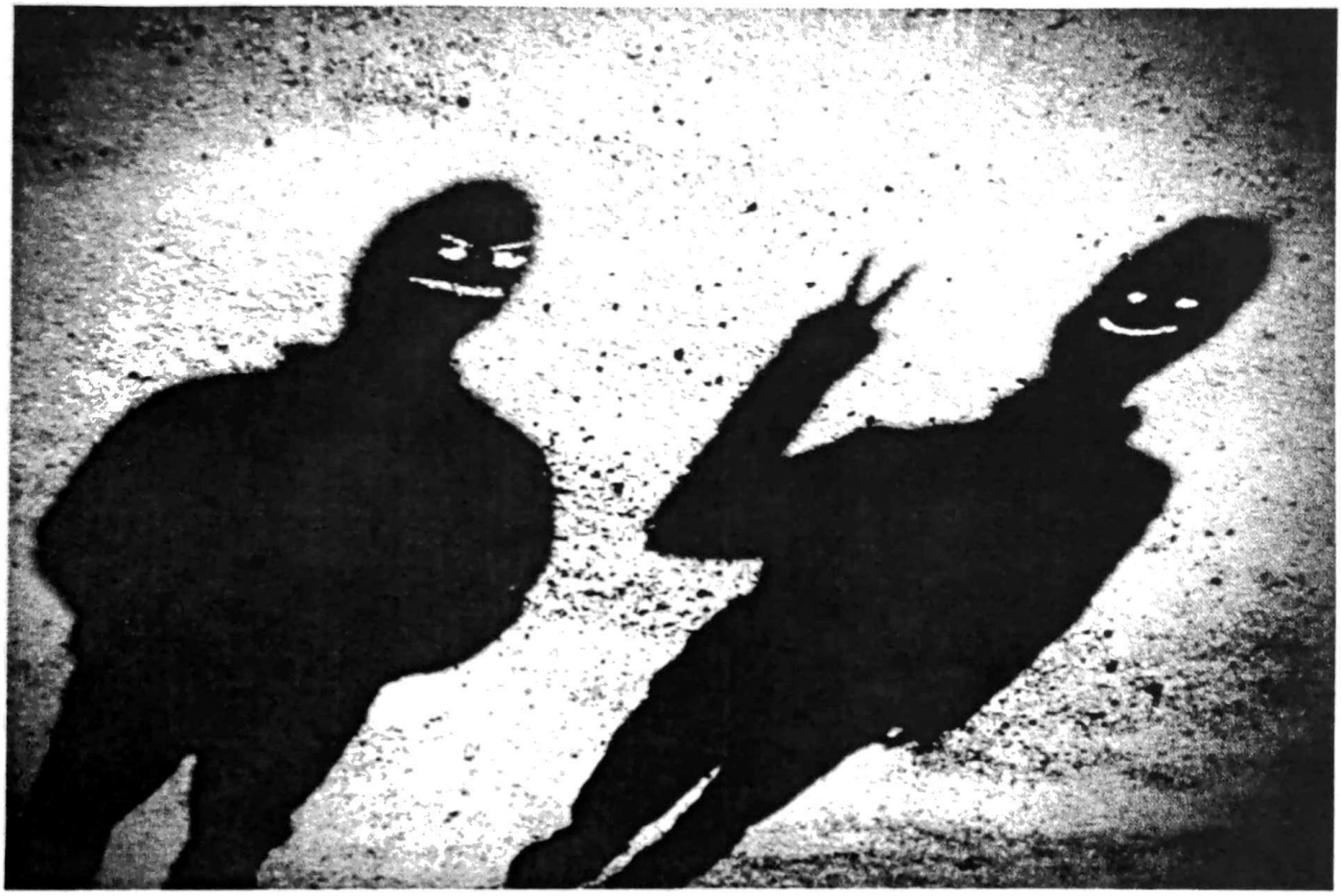

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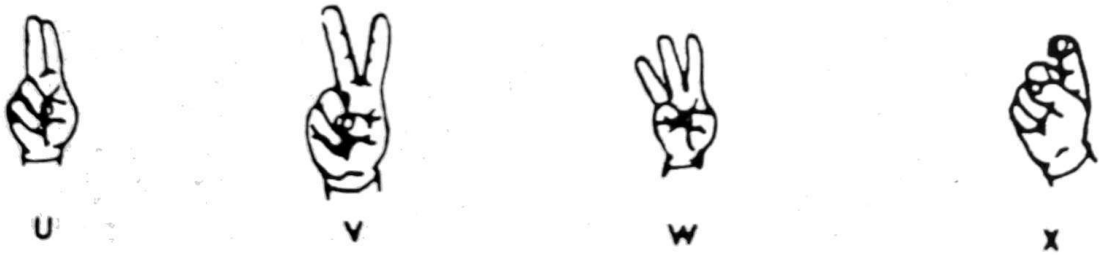

Be Brave Bold Robot, Spring 2007,
Sacramento, California, USA, Earth.
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No reprinting or anything smarmy like that, please, without permission, at least. so for that permission, or contact with piecemakers, OR Peacemakers! or to contribute something, anything (drawings, text, rubbings) or vent, or confess your sins, please email the contact at **www.bebraveboldrobot.com**. If you would like to post or find out about quality Sacramento area musical performances, go to **www.undietacos.org**. Please and Thank You. And thanks for reading Zines. Zines are fun and people should read them and make them. All the time. Sure, some "suck", but usually I have found that it is only an initial impression because zines (those sexy little packets of emotion jelly) are presented in such a subjective format that it takes a bit of exposure, and usually repeated exposure, to appreciate them, as moods and appreciation change and flux with each other and with the weather and with our individual trials and tribulations and, gods forbid, traffic violations. But, they deserve a chance like anything else, Zines, and you just might find yourself pleasantly surprised. contributing awesome people whose names are not with their pieces: Jonathan Busuttil (front cover and centerfold), John Flores (back cover), Dean Haakenson, Darte Hunt, Jasmine Loucks, Scott Moore, and Shane Skogberg.

Jesus Blesses Little Children

Some people brought their to so that he could bless them by placing his on them. But his disciples told the people to stop bothering him.

When saw this, he became angry and said, "Let the come to me! Don't try to stop them. People who are like these little belong to the kingdom of God. I promise you that you cannot get into God's kingdom, unless you accept it the way a child does." Then took the in his arms and blessed them by placing his on them.

MARK 10.13-16

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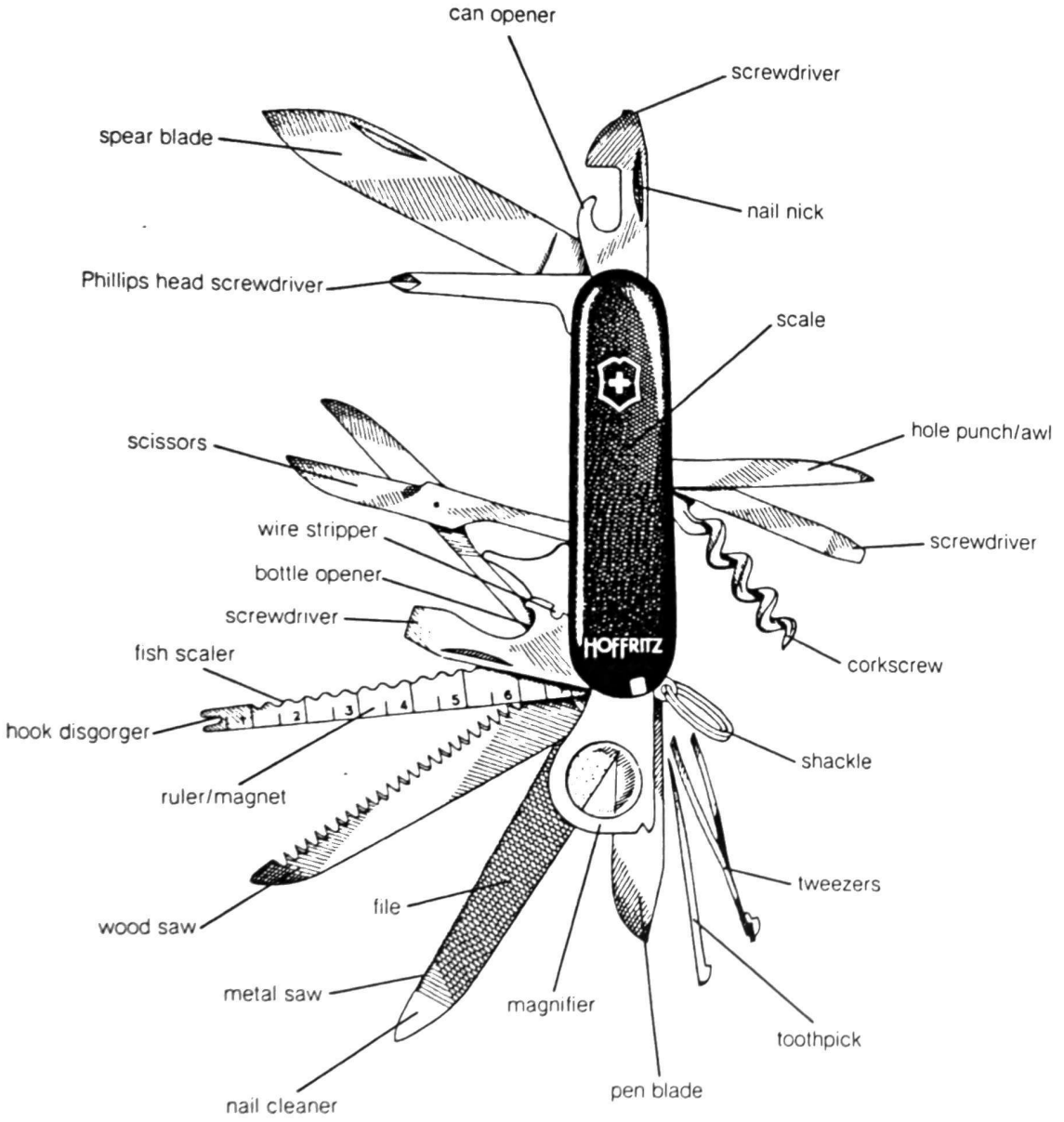


Swiss Army Suicide
By
Sean Michael Kilcoyne

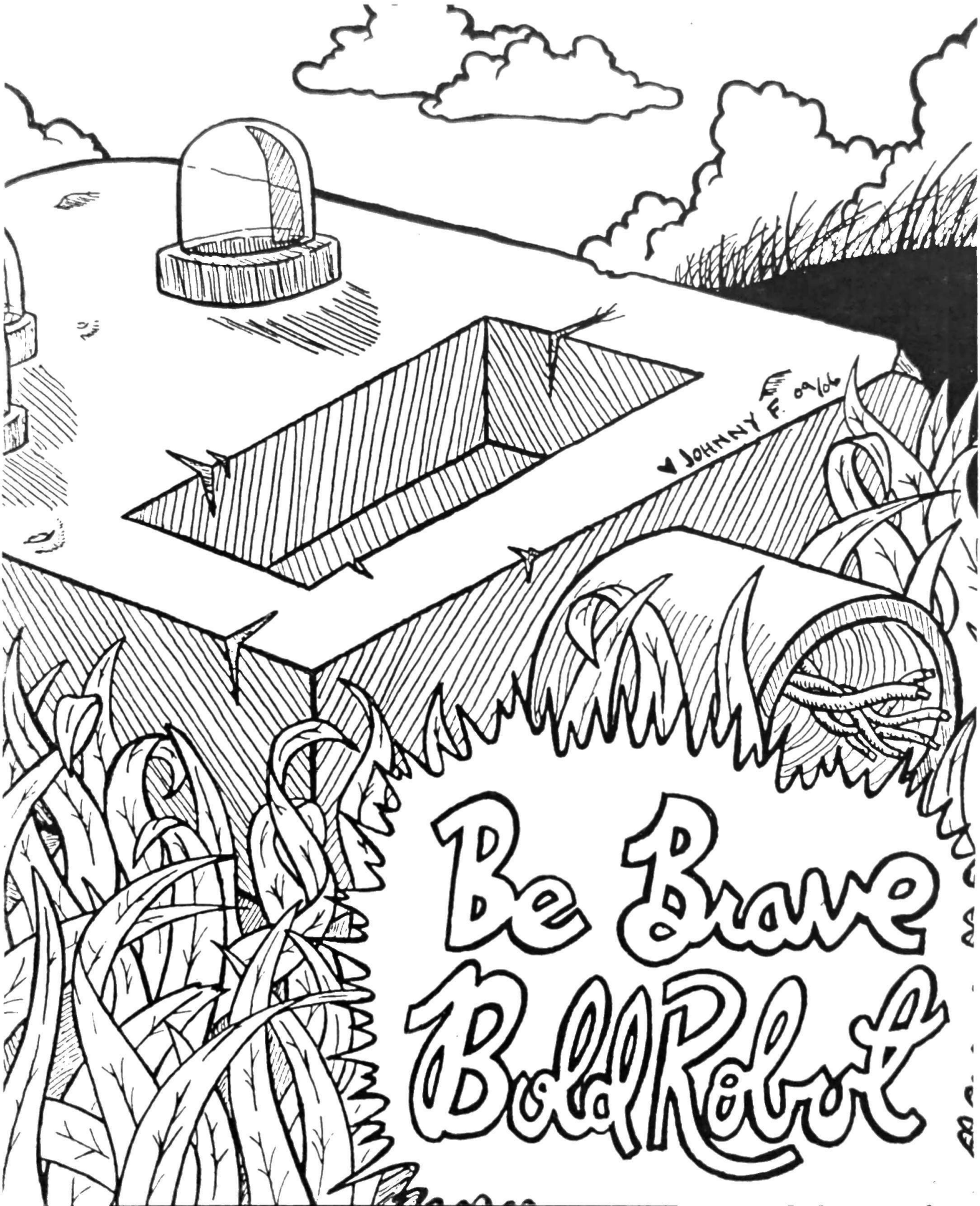
My Swiss Army Knife
doesn't have a picture of you.
I thought it had everything
that I could ever use.
Now I'm searching so hard
and I just can't seem to find
the piece on my
Swiss Army Knife
to turn the hands of time.

Swiss Army Suicide

I have a heart that's
full of sorrow
but my knife is just too dull
to pluck it from my chest
on to the rocks below.
And I'm crying
Yes I'm trying
to get myself to you.
Yes I would, if I could
but this knife is just no use

Swiss Army Suicide

I have a heart that's
full of sorrow
but my knife is just too dull
to pluck it from chest
on to the rocks below.
And I'm trying so hard
but I just can't seem to find
the piece on my
Swiss Army Knife
to turn the hands of time.


JOHNNY F. 09/06
Be Brave
Bold Robot